The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian.

No. 39. SEPTEMBER, 1910. PRICE ONE PENNY. 1s. 6d. per annum, post free.

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Notes of the Month.

THE death of Florence Nightingale, following so quickly upon the references called forth by her ninetieth birthday, will serve to deepen the interest in, and the admiration for, a most noble and unselfish personality. There was never any fear that her self-sacrificing labours would be forgotten for they were not only rooted deeply in the affectionate remembrance of thousands of people, but were perpetuating themselves in the many splendid institutions which sprang into existence upon her great initiative. If the lot of millions of sufferers has been largely ameliorated, if increasing numbers of trained nurses have gone forth as ministering angels to work among the sick and suffering, it was because of the inspiration which came from her great example. The impulse which prompted her to take up the cause of the wounded British soldiers in the Crimea, while manifested in immediate acts never to be forgotten, did not spend itself in a period of war, but has found widespread expression in times of peace. To-day, as never before, the nursing profession calls forth not only devoted care and loving self-sacrifice, but demands many years of patient and intelligent preparation. For the better results due to these we owe her a debt we can never repay, but we can at least join whole-heartedly and gratefully in the pean of praise and admiration her work has evoked. If a summary of the significance of her career be needed it can find no more fitting form than in the words which she penned in her old age, words which prove that success never affected her simple religious faith: "My own life shows how a woman of very ordinary ability has been led by God, by strange and unaccustomed paths. If I could tell you all, you would see how God has done all, and I nothing. I have worked very hard, and that is all, *and I have refused God nothing*, though (being naturally a very shy person) most of my life has been distasteful to me. I have no peculiar gifts, and I can honestly assure any young lady that she will soon be able to run the appointed course if she will but try to *walk*. But most people do not even *try* to walk."

Another notable death in recent days is that of Earl Spencer. Latterly he had not been very prominent in public affairs, but there was a time when no man's name was more familiar to Irish people than his. He twice held the post of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and the second tenure of his office coincided with the occurrence of one of the most tragic events in Irish history. When Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Thomas Burke were assassinated in 1882, Earl Spencer was the one called upon to deal with the terrible situation. If not, perhaps, one of the greatest of statesmen he was personally popular and endeared himself to many who differed from him in politics. He was a lover of culture and the possessor of the famous Althorp collection of books which later formed the nucleus of the Ryland's Library in Manchester. For many years he also filled picturesquely and capably the position of Chancellor of the Victoria University, and it was only advancing years which compelled him to relinquish that office and other similar public duties.

* * *

The particulars of the terrible Kelvin Hotel calamity will be fresh in the minds of all our readers, and truly has it been said that not for many years has an event happened in Belfast by which its people have been more moved than by this fire, which in Mr. M'Caughan has claimed its fifth victim, and in Mrs. M'Caughan its sixth. Preaching in the First Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street, on Sunday, 31st July, the Rev. E. Savell Hicks, of Dublin, made reference to the sad event which, he said, was in the minds of all gathered at that service. All their hearts went out in sympathy to their Presbyterian friends, who had suffered so tragic a bereavement in the loss of Mr. M'Caughan. He left behind him a clean and beautiful record of service well and truly rendered to God and man, and the city will be the poorer both in its intellectual and spiritual life by the passing on to the higher service of a brave and good man. To each in turn, Unitarian or Trinitarian, the summons came at last from the Great Ruler of our destinies, and the call was to each to make the true preparation for whatever lay beyond the mysterious gates of death by filling each day and year as it came with faithful service such as Mr. M'Caughan had rendered—the service that went to the building of the higher nation and the greater empire of the future, when the sorrow and suffering of the world should at length be done away, and the golden age for which they all prayed and worked should be here indeed.

* * *

Speaking, in his annual report, of preventable causes of insanity, Dr. Graham says :—" There can be no question but that in the future educational methods will play a larger part than in the past in the prevention of mental disease. Let us take one concrete illustration of the value of education in these matters. A distinct and perfectly preventable cause of insanity is the use of alcoholic intoxicants. Roughly speaking, 25 per cent. of all the insanity in the world would be wiped out if the present generation suddenly resolved to become total abstainers. Not only is alcoholism a direct cause of insanity, but it is an important factor in producing mental disease where the whole evil cannot be set down to its account alone. One of the growing needs of our country is the universal teaching of the rising generation the cold scientific facts about alcohol, education based on accurate knowledge of the evil effects of alcohol on mind and body."

* * *

Whilst perfectly convinced that alcohol has much to do with the production of insanity, and that the less there is of it consumed the better, we do not on that account regard alcohol as the only factor in the problem. No doubt the causes are many and various. Here for instance is the opinion of Dr. Barron which appears to have much in it. He says :—" The cause of the whole trouble is due to our staple diet being deficient in nutriment, viz., white branless flour.

The analysis of white flour and bran proves this independent of experience. White flour contains only 6 per cent. of proteids and 1 per cent. of salts, while the outer coating of the wheat, *i.e.*, bran contains 16 per cent. of proteids and 6 per cent. of salts. It is clearly seen from this that the wheat is robbed of nearly all its nourishing qualities by this nefarious practice."

SOME DIFFICULT TEXTS.

(I.)

Matthew xi. 12.—"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force." (Cf. Luke xvi. 16.)

A FRIEND of ours once replied to a man who came to him with a verse of Scripture and asked him what it meant, "I should not be at all surprised if it means what it says." It must often seem to the plain man that some of the critics approach the sayings of Jesus with the incorrigible assumption that whatever meaning they may have, they do not mean what they say. For example, in regard to the text we have taken for consideration, one scholar holds the theory that John the Baptist and Jesus were the "men of violence"—a theory which not only puts a strain upon Matthew's language which it is incapable of bearing, but which is also inconsistent with the parallel verse in Luke, where we read that "every man entereth violently." Again, Professor Adeney, in the "Century Bible," commenting on this verse in Luke, thinks that all that is meant by "every man entereth violently" is that people were unwilling to enter the kingdom by the door, and were trying to force themselves in some other way. If this is what Jesus meant, we can only remark that he did not say it, for his statement is, not that men were *trying* to enter the kingdom of God, but that they were actually entering, and that they gained admittance as violent men by means of violence.

In this short note we shall take the words of Jesus as we find them, and endeavour to state their meaning in harmony with the rest of his teaching. The best interpreter of Jesus is Jesus himself; where the meaning of one of his sayings is doubtful, that interpretation is likeliest to be correct which is in agreement with other sayings of his.

The real difficulty of this verse consists in the association of violence with the kingdom of heaven. Violence is an ugly word. However innocent, and perhaps honourable, its origin may be, it has got a bad character. It is now used almost exclusively to denote the unjust and brutal exercise of force. Such violence, of course, stands in direct opposition to the kingdom of heaven as Jesus taught it, and we cannot for a moment entertain the idea that Jesus meant that such force can avail for entrance into the kingdom, as though the lawless will of man could bully and overpower the righteous will of God.

It might be possible to argue that the words violent and violence in this verse are used in their inoffensive sense. Violence may be used in a good cause as well as in an evil. Jesus may have meant by the word simply vehement action, strenuousness. The Greek word may bear this significance. Its root, for instance, is used to describe the strength of Hercules. Our word violent literally means full of might, and is sometimes used to express legitimate force and passion. In Shakespeare we read concerning Desdemona's love for Othello, "With what violence she first loved the Moor." (ii, l).

But we feel that the language is too strong to justify this interpretation, and we would rather explain the words of Jesus than seem to explain them away. We accept, therefore, the terms 'violence,' 'men of violence,' as commonly understood. What, then, did Jesus mean by applying them to gaining admission to the kingdom of heaven? We believe that he used them as bold figures of speech. It seems to us that the great truth he emphasises in this saying is that one of the conditions for

entering into the kingdom is strenuousness—earnest, urgent action. If a man would possess that kingdom, he must strive, struggle, agonise for it, forcibly lay hold on it. And, in order to illustrate the reality of this strong Christian fight, he compares it with the way in which men of violence forcibly seize their booty. Those who are acquainted with the teaching of Jesus in the first three Gospels will not need to be told that he constantly uses this strong pictorial method, and they will know also that he often took as his lesson objects qualities exhibited by irreligious people to force attention to qualities he desired in his disciples. The difficult parable of the Unjust Steward is a case in point. "The sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of light." And in this undeveloped parable of the men of violence, the point is not that the kingdom of heaven can be seized by unjust violence, but that it cannot be gained at all except by strenuous effort—a determination and struggle on the part of the Christian answering to the vehemence manifested by the violent in gaining their unrighteous ends. Otherwise the sons of this world are wiser in their generation than the sons of light.

We cannot do better than quote the words of Wendt as a succinct commentary on the whole verse: "When Jesus contrasts the prophetic period of promise and expectation ending with John the Baptist with the present realisation of the kingdom of God, he uses this strong figurative expression of violence and seizure, which in their peculiar meaning were applied to the unjust, forcible appropriation of other's goods, not, of course, because he finds the point of analogy in the injustice and violence, as if men could appropriate a share in the kingdom in opposition to the divine will, but because he sought to lay stress on the necessity of urgent, energetic laying hold of a good to which they could make no claim. It is of no avail in regard to the kingdom of God to wait idly, as in other cases men may take a waiting attitude in regard to a gift, nor does it avail energetically to seek laboriously to earn it. It is ready as a gift of God to man, but men must direct their desire and will towards it. ("Teaching of Jesus," II, viii., 49.)

To sum up, we think that this saying of Jesus means the necessity for earnest strenuousness in religion. He warns us that it is not an easy thing to be a Christian. The kingdom of God is not only a gift to be received, it is a hard fight to be won. The grace of God does not destroy but sanctify the strong fighting spirit of true manhood. None but the strenuous spirit can enter the kingdom. This interpretation of the verse is in keeping with the dominant note of Christ's message, with its strong, uncompromising demand for striving, struggle, suffering, and self-sacrifice. He tells us that we must be prepared to give up everything for the kingdom's sake (Matt. xiii., 44-46); we must strive to enter in (Luke xiii, 24); we must count the cost (Luke xiv., 28); we must be willing to maim the body rather than lose the soul (Matt. xviii., 8); we must take the cross and lose our life for his sake that we may find it (Matt. x., 38, 39). All these sayings, and many others, confirm our reading of the verse we have considered, and the matter is summed up in the words, "Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called." (1 Tim., vi., 12).

SUNDAY MORNING SOLILOQUIES OF HEZEKIAH GOODENOUGH.

Recorded by Rev. W. S. Smith.

CREED AND CONDUCT.

I HAVE been thinking a good deal of late, of the influence of faith, or doctrine, over conduct. Some folk laugh at me because I look at the subject in a serious light, and say it doesn't matter a fig what I believe, so long as I try to do my best. I'm not satisfied with this kind of talk. If opinions have no influence over us, they are not worth troubling ourselves about. My friends talk as though one set of opinions was just as good as another, morally. They won't, therefore, bother their heads about such a matter, and think those who do, must be foolish indeed.

I may be a wee bit lazy, and I'm afraid I couldn't deny it, especially on Sundays, but I'm not one of those folk. My little bit of Sunday thinking leads me to the belief that when faith is really a conviction of the heart, it must necessarily have a decided influence over the quality of the life one lives ; and this being so, it is my bounden duty to get the most consistent and reasonable views possible of God, and his moral government, Jesus Christ, and his mission, the Bible, duty, responsibility and immortality. Faith is what the sun and pole-star were to the mariner of old. And so right, true principles, when conscientiously held, and allowed to exercise their due influence over the heart, must lead to a right, true, virtuous life, while erroneous principles, also conscientiously held, and allowed free scope over the mind, must result in moral or religious shipwreck. And what could be more natural ?

Now, it seems to me, though it is not pleasant to speak against the faith of my neighbours, that many of the doctrines they profess, if sincerely held, must lead to moral disaster. If my dear son Johnnie, really believed that he was totally depraved, deceitful, and desperately wicked, as many children are taught that they are, and that God made him so, what could be more likely than that he would become a liar, a thief, yea, everything that was bad ? And if I remonstrated with him for his conduct, he might, with perfect justice, turn upon me and say—" What is the use of my trying to walk uprightly, when God has created me all awry—morally crooked, spiritually blind, opposed to everything good and with my heart wholly inclined to everything evil ? " And what more natural ? Of what use would punishment be to him ? I could not possibly beat that out of his bones, that was naturally bred in his heart. " Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ? " And how could I have the heart to punish him for doing what, by nature, he was prone to do, unless indeed, I determined to fight against God Himself ? For, would not his wickedness arise from God's ordering ? And what could magistrates, and judges, say to prisoners who pleaded that in accordance with the creeds, God had created their hearts so vile, that they naturally became criminal and vicious, in spite of the law ! And of what use would punishment be with a view to the reformation of such ? Where would be the justice of inflicting it ? There's something not right somewhere, that's clear enough.

If I held that I was not a responsible being —though the Parable of the Talents was doubtless intended to teach me that I am— and that Jesus Christ would bear the consequences of my sins, should I not be led to think lightly of wickedness ? I'm afraid I should, and that I might sink down, down, down to the lowest depth of moral degradation. Nay, I think the doctrine of Christ dying to bear away my sins, coupled with that of the adding of his righteousness to make up for my deficiencies, would be calculated to make an arrant coward of me, by robbing me of any self-reliance I may possess. Whereas, I now feel if I do not bear the effects of my own sins, I shall have no one, apart from the forgiveness of God, to bear them for me, and so must strive to walk straight to avoid the consequences.

Yes, it does, it must matter, what people believe. I know that if I believed I should get as good crops without ploughing, manuring and sowing, as with, and acted accordingly I should find out my mistake when harvest time came. Or, if I got it into my poor, old head that it didn't matter what kind of seed I sowed, whether sound or rotten, a few months would show that I had either been befooled by some one, or that I had befooled myself. Yet, is not the springing of virtuous conduct from an inconsistent, untrue, unworthy, or degrading faith, just as likely as gathering good crops from fallow ground, or from the scattering of rotten seed ? That was a good story I once read of Coleridge the poet. He had been discussing with a neighbour the question as to whether parents should imbue the minds of their children with what they consider true religious opinions, he maintaining that it was wrong to do so, and against the principles of religious liberty to bias them in favour of any opinions. Shortly afterwards, Coleridge was looking into his neighbour's garden and noticing a number of weeds, asked how they came to grow there, when the reply was given that the garden had not been biassed in favour of producing anything better. Surely, that was a nut which Coleridge would endeavour to crack as soon as possible.

I'm therefore forced to believe that a steadfast faith, in truth, should lead to a just and upright life. And likewise, if I confide in doctrines inculcating the original corruption and the accursed character of my nature, and the fixed decrees of God as to that accursedness, irrespective of my best endeavours, I do not see how either God, or man, could expect from me any other than a life as dark, dismal, and cruel, as my creed.

This question of faith is with me a moral question. Belief has its responsibilities, as well as conduct. There are certain things I must accept on the authority of others, because I cannot verify them for myself. I cannot verify the statement as to the distance round the earth, or how far the moon is from us, but I am able to tell of my own knowledge, what in theology is reasonable, what to me bears the stamp of truth. And I am not only able to do this, but it is my duty to do it. I am morally bound, as far as I can, to test the foundations of faith, which is so influential for good or evil ; and with such materials as are supplied by nature, God-inspired souls, and reason, to formulate for myself, the most consistent, reasonable, practical faith, that will be a guide, an inspiration, and a key to my life here, and to my hopes concerning the

great hereafter. I think I am just as responsible for such a faith, as I am for my conduct in life. It is my duty to act aright, and it is just as much—or even more so, seeing my deeds are the outcome of my faith—my duty to think aright. Right thinking first, that right conduct may follow. If I have reposed faith in truth, my life ought to be upright, consistent, truthful, and consequently acceptable in the sight of God, while, if I have trusted in error, in untruth, my life will be an ignoble and unworthy one. If I hold a true and ennobling faith, and yet live an unworthy life, it is at once evident that I am faithless to my convictions, untrue to the truth; and if I hold an unreasonable, inconsistent and untrue faith, and yet live a good life, then again, I am faithless to my faith, faithless to untruth, and fortunately so. The instincts of my heart prove better than the beliefs of my head; my aspirations prove better and truer than my creed. But there must always be this danger, that a muddled, contradictory, untrue, ungodlike faith, may result in a perverted, unreasonable, inconsistent, immoral life. A man should look well to his understandings, or he may fall into the ditch. I'll try.

It always seems to me, and I have had my times of joy and sorrow, ill health, prosperity and adversity, that Unitarian Christianity is an ennobling, reasonable, inspiring, hopeful, practical, and yet consolatory faith. The original innocence of human nature, the undivided power and sovereignty of God, the individual responsibility of man, with trust in the justice, wisdom, love and mercy of the Heavenly Father, are doctrines calculated to render life real, earnest, devout, cheerful and hopeful.

Let me then, so far as I am able, do my own thinking. God has given me mental powers. Let me summon to their assistance all the aids possible, and where in consequence of the thickness of the veil, or the prevailing gloom, I fail to penetrate and reach the truth, I shall prefer to trust Almighty Love, rather than the tender mercies of the theological dictators, and the self-appointed dispensers of salvation. Truly, as James says, ... faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone," and James I always think, must have been a practical sort of man.

When God speaks He speaks so loud that all the voices of the world seem dumb. And yet when God speaks He speaks so softly that no one hears the whisper but yourself.

Goethe, Byron, and Carlyle taught Humanity much, but they had no programme for it. Byron's thinking was suffering; Carlyle's despair. Christianity alone exults.

AN INTERESTING INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT.

By Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D.

FOR many years the Co-operative Holidays Association has done splendid work in the establishing of suitable holiday centres in Great Britain, and by its provision of rational and carefully arranged holidays. When long and steadily increasing success had crowned its efforts at home its attention was turned abroad in order that in foreign lands the same healthy, educational work might be fostered and encouraged. It is about the latest and perhaps the most promising effort of this kind that the writer wishes to speak at first hand, after a recent delightful experience. A year ago the above Association succeeded in finding a suitable centre in the Taunus district of Germany. Beautifully-wooded country, together with the near presence of some of the finest and most attractive of cities, formed an ideal combination, and large parties of British visitors, who were induced to spend a fortnight's holiday under such conditions, returned home delighted with all they had seen and experienced. But a greater end than that was achieved by the visitors. Coming into constant contact and intercourse with German people the latter were so impressed by the spectacle of parties of English visitors enjoying themselves in a rational and highly satisfactory way that they thought a similar organised movement would be a boon in Germany. Accordingly during the present year a German Holiday Association was formed and through its agency a hundred and twenty German men and

women visited England and were received and catered for at selected English centres. There, according to their own testimony, given to the present writer, they had the most enjoyable holiday of their lives. Hence when they returned to their Fatherland they were full of gratitude for the treatment they had received, loud in their praise of English friendliness and English hospitality, and eager to do all in their power to foster Anglo-German friendships. Those who, along with the present witness, came within their sphere of influence a few weeks ago can gladly testify how heartily and generously they did their part. When we visited the city of Frankfort they received us at the station, constituted themselves our leaders and friends, and devoted the remainder of the day to making our visit enjoyable and memorable. Under the guidance of an eminent artist and art teacher we were shown the oldest parts of the city, admitted to art galleries and museums when these were closed to the general public, and finally entertained to tea in the magnificent Palm Gardens of Frankfort. Here one of this band of cultured German friends took the opportunity of giving to the British visitors a hearty welcome and hoped that the acquaintanceship and intercourse thus pleasantly begun among a comparative few might be reflected and fostered amongst many. While there were many reasons why Englishmen and Germans should be the best of friends there was no earthly reason why mutual suspicion and mistrust should interpose to breed hostility or engender strife. When, as the leader of the English band, the present writer responded, he expressed not only his own heartfelt conviction, but also that of all his countrymen, when he declared that they would not easily forget the great kindness shown to them, and would do all in their power to further the cause of Anglo-German peace and goodwill amongst men. As if to give fuller expression to their friendly feelings some of these kindly Germans invited us to their homes, ministered to our creature comforts, and, most of all, treated us not as strangers and sojourners, but as veritable members of their household. Occasionally they joined us on our excursions, dropped in to spend with us a convivial hour in the evenings, and finally when we had to part begged us to go again and cement the mutually-pleasing relationships then begun. As a means to the same great end of international understanding and good-will a further experiment was tried and has proved a decided success. A small band of German schoolboys were sent to England and received in private homes in order that they might see English life at first hand and know what was characteristic of the English home. This prompted, and was responsible for, a return visit. At the present time a party of English schoolboys in charge of Mr. Paton, the High Master of the Manchester Grammar School, is in Germany. On their arrival they were met by boy members of a German Rambling Club to be guided by them through some of the most beautiful scenery in Germany. Later they are to settle down as guests in German houses, the invitations for that purpose having been most eager and hearty. The heads of families have vied with one another in friendly overtures towards these foreign schoolboys, all of whom were unknown to their would-be entertainers. The consequence is that already there has been evoked at home and abroad a spirit of hospitality, ob-

livious of international differences, real or imagined, and eager to find objects for its utmost endeavours. Men and women who might have remained ignorant, and perhaps suspicious, of each other have mingled together freely and in the most friendly way, realising that racial prejudice cannot live in the light of mutual knowledge and sympathetic understanding. Already it seems probable that the number of Germans who will visit Great Britain next year will be far larger than that which came here during the present year. Moreover, their dearly-cherished aim is to open in places like the Harz Mountains and the Black Forest, centres where Germans and English will share the same roof, meet around the same table, and discover in friendly, delightful intercourse the possibilities of an international friendship so deep and so far-reaching that the thought of war will be as abhorrent to the mind as it will be impossible in the fact. May all success attend the efforts of men everywhere who labour for such an end !

All great empires have been thrifty ; all great empires that were meant to continue to abide were thrifty. Take the Roman Empire, which lay like an iron stamp upon the face of the world. That was founded on thrift. When it ceased to be thrifty it degenerated and came to an end. Prussia began with a little narrow spit of sand in the North of Europe—all sting, as someone said of its shape and the fact that all its inhabitants were armed men. It was nurtured by the thrift of Frederick the Great's father, who prepared the vast red treasure and army of economy which we should call sordid, but which was the weapon on which the greatness of Prussia was founded, from which the present German Empire has arisen.—*Lord Rosebery.*

REPORTS

Ballee.—By invitation of Rev. J. H. Bibby, the members of Ballee Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church choir had their annual Picnic on the 4th ult. A very unpromising wet forenoon was followed by an agreeable change in the weather conditions, and the afternoon found a merry party assembled at Bishopscourt, where a few hours were happily spent both indoor and in the open, no effort being spared by the kind host to ensure the enjoyment of all present. Tea having been taken in due course, the remainder of the evening was devoted to music, twilight with its thoughts of home-going coming all too quickly. Refreshments and sweets having been disposed of, the day's enjoyment came to a close with mutual farewells and a hearty expression of thanks to Mr. Bibby.

Belfast Domestic Mission.—The young people connected with the Sunday School had their Annual Fete on Saturday, July 23rd, at Beechmount, by the kind invitation of the Misses Riddel. Following a somewhat stormy week, the unexpected happened in the dawning of a beautifully fine day. After a ride through the city in special tramcars, the children were prompt to take possession of the park, and explore its unaccustomed possibilities in a way that would have surprised an ordinary country dweller. During the afternoon the usual races took place, and after tea upwards of one hundred money and other prizes were distributed by Miss Riddel, who, with her sister, took the liveliest personal interest in the enjoyment of the young folk, and no effort was spared in the entertainment of the parents and friends. Unfortunately, several of the teachers, including Miss J. E. Bruce, were away on holiday, but Miss C. Bruce, Miss Frances M'Tear and Miss Duffin were able to be present, and assisted by Messrs. Houston and M'Cafferty (old mission workers) the proceedings passed without hitch. After singing a Sunday School hymn and the gift of fruit to each child by Miss Riddel, the entire party were brought by private cars to Stanhope Street.

Cairncastle.—The Fete of the Sunday and National Schools connected with the Old Meeting House was held on Friday, 19th August, in the field opposite to the Manse, kindly lent as in so many former years by Mr. Joseph Sheriff, a member of the other Presbyterian congregation. Although the first part of the day had been very wet, so that the ground was decidedly damp to say the least of it, and some of the smaller children living at a distance, who would otherwise have ventured to the field, were kept at home, there was a very fair attendance. After tea,

served in the schoolroom at the early but customary hour of about half-past two, the children played games and ran races in the field, and some of the youths and maidens danced upon the green to the music of the fiddler from Larne. Among those who lent most kindly aid in the entertainment of the children, were Mrs. Thomas, widow of the late minister of the Old Meeting House, and Rev. and Mrs. S. Clarke. The rain, which had kept off during the afternoon, began to come on again at six o'clock ; an adjournment was accordingly made to the schoolroom where lemonade and cake were handed round, after which a merry party played games of " Magic Music," " General Post," and " The Minister's Cat " till it was possible to return to the field. By this time quite a large number of adults had gathered to thespot, in anticipation of a dance in the school-house which was kept up in perfect order and seemliness till midnight.

Kilwaughter Sunday School.—The Annual Fete in connection with the above was held on the last Saturday in July when unfortunately, the weather was most unpropitious. Such of the children as could brave the rain assembled with their teachers and a few friends in their schoolroom at 2-30 where they were regaled in the usual way. The Olderfleet Brass Band was in attendance, under the leadership of which, the rain having ceased for a time, they marched, at 4 p.m., to the field set apart as usual for their accommodation by Mr. Sam Bailie. Here the usual recreations were indulged in for two or three hours, damp notwithstanding, while many parents and friends enjoyed the pleasure of looking on. But a more than usually early return had to be made to the schoolroom which was now taxed to its utmost holding capacity. Here by the kindness of Mrs. Sam Bailie, refreshments, sweets, lemonade, &c., were distributed. The juveniles having retired the seniors enjoyed themselves till 11-30 with the aid of gramophone, melodeon, &c., after the departure of the Brass Band. Mr. M'Keown had made all necessary arrangements for the fete which is usually most successful and very largely attended under normal circumstances. It may be gratifying to his many friends to know that at the Examinations lately held in connection with the Smiley Exhibitions at Larne Grammar School one of Mr. M'Keown's day pupils, Frank Johnston, took first place and won the exhibition, while two others, J. Greenless and Andrew M'Keown took third and fourth places respectively. The competition was very severe, pupils from many schools, one even from so far off as Whitehead sitting for examination.

Moira, Co. Down.—On Saturday, Aug. 6th, a Sale of Work was held in the beautiful demesne, for the purpose of raising funds to make some very necessary repairs to the ancient Non-Subscribing Church in this locality. The Sale was opened by James Moore, Esq. (Finaghy), who was accompanied by Mrs. Moore and their daughter Mrs. Brooke, from London, and her husband. The chair was taken by J. R. Miniss, Esq., J.P. (Dromore). We were favoured also by the presence of Revs. E. Lockett (Banbridge), E. A. Voysey (Belfast), S. R. Bowen (Crumlin), A. Davison (Dromore), J. A. Kelly (Dunmurry), W. A. Weatherall (Nantwich), and the local Presbyterian and Methodist Ministers, T. G. M'Farland and R. Cullen, with their families. Other representatives of congregations also came from Ballyclare, Belfast, Crumlin, Dromore, Dunmurry, Holywood and Newry. A great number who intended to be with us were prevented by Sunday School Excursions which had been arranged for same date by their own churches. There was also a good turnout of the Unity Guild from Belfast, the members of which entered most heartily into everything that would tend to the general success of the proceedings of the day. Three large tents gave ample space for the operations and enjoyment of the numerous visitors. Music at intervals was discoursed by two flute bands from Ballygowan and Soldierstown respectively, and a Brass Band from Lisburn. The weather was delightfully fine at the end of a week of doubtful promise. The sales, half-hour concerts, shooting competitions and refreshments were brisk and constant, being pleasantly cared for in a most delightfully efficient manner by the members of our congregation, assisted by many friends from all the surrounding churches. A large contingent of the Dromore Non-Subscribers came over in a brake. A special feature of sustained interest of the day was centred on a Stop Watch Competition for a pedigree lamb presented by Charles Baxter, Esq., of that congregation, with the pleasing result that the nearest guess, by the narrow majority of four and a quarter seconds, was that of Mr. Henry Sprott, treasurer of the congregation, who kindly gave the lamb back to the bazaar. The successful carrying out of the day's proceedings was under the direction of our Bazaar Secretaries, Miss Weatherall, Mr. W. J. Agnew, and the treasurer, Mr. W. Wilkinson, also Mr. J. Wilson and Mr. J. L. James of the Board of Trade, Liverpool. The Sale has proved quite satisfactory.

Mountpottinger.—The Annual Floral and Sunday School Anniversary Services were held on Sunday, July 3rd, when Rev. G. L. Phelps was the special preacher. Willing hands had created the pulpit and other portions of the church into a veritable bower of flowers, the effect being distinctly pleasing to the eye. A specially augmented choir rendered appropriate music under the direction of Miss Morrow, A.L.C.M. A Duet, entitled, "The Rose is Queen among the Flowers," was rendered by Misses L. Cheshire and A. Neill. Addressing the scholars at the afternoon ser-

vice Mr. Phelps took as his text Ecclesiastes xi., 6. He said this text being on the Motto Card for the year was appropriate as it reminded them nothing came without sowing. As bulbs taught that many good things are hidden under ground and have to fight their way upwards before coming to perfection, so is youth the time to prepare for a happy lifetime because it is the seed-time of life. He warned his listeners not to be disheartened if at first their seed seemed to be producing but small results, and not when still young to grumble at their tasks, as in all probability such would yield abundant fruit of happiness and gladness in days to be. The address was illustrated verbally by some appropriate anecdotes.

Unity Guild.—The second Excursion of the season was held on June 25th, the destination being Newry (by kind invitation of Rev. G. J. Slipper). Our host met the party at Newry Station and the first step was to inspect the church and schoolroom, the compactness of which called forth favourable criticism. An advance was then made to view the spot where the old church was situated and incidentally to inspect the famous old Sundial. Leaving here en route for the Manse, most of the party inspected the new Roman Catholic Cathedral, the (to our minds) somewhat gorgeous embellishment and furnishing of which was in striking contrast to the squalor of many of the streets we had passed through. Arrived at the Manse we found a substantial tea awaiting us which was served in the garden and to which full justice was done. Following this pleasing function a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. and Mrs. Slipper and the party passed the time until the train hour by wandering about the grounds and incidentally undergoing the prevailing modern ordeal of being photographed.

ECHOES.

The Christian Commonwealth recently directed the attention of its readers to the life story of the Rev. Alexander Irvine of New York, and gave long extracts "*From the Bottom Up*," that Mr. Irvine has published. This book is referred to by *The Spectator* as "one of the most interesting autobiographies it had ever read. It is certainly a most vividly realistic record of the writer's coming into a hungry world like Ginx's baby, and enduring all sorts of privations, but bravely struggling with them and achieving much. It so happens that Mr. Irvine is an Antrim man, but I had never heard of him until the year 1888, when I received a communication from a person serving in the navy, inquiring about certain pamphlets bearing on Antrim and the neighbourhood. Several letters passed between us, from which I learned something of parentage and early life in the town of my correspondent, how as a bare-legged boy he had hawked newspapers about the streets, worked on the farm of the late James Chaine, Esq., M.P., near Muckamore, then in a coal-mine near Glasgow, afterwards enlisting in the navy, and always looking upward and strenuously endeavouring to cultivate his mind. He said he had tried essay writing as a member of a Literary Society, and public speaking, and felt encouraged by the results. Eventually he said he would like to revisit Antrim and even venture upon the delivery of a lecture in the Protestant Hall, if the vicar, the late Rev. J. G. Holmes, B.A., and I would organize such an undertaking. We conferred and at length decided to make the venture, though it was in a sense "a leap in the dark." The hall was taken, bills were issued, and a lecture on General Gordon given without note or hesitation. The audience was a good one, and the event proved an entire success. When the term of his service was over young Irvine went to the United States (he had informed me that he would do so), had a variety of strange experiences, but always animated with a laudable ambition, and always associating himself with religious and philanthropic efforts. Eventually he became assistant minister at the Church of the Ascension in New York. His work there has been of a very successful, but of a very socialistic character, so much so, that the deacons have at length expressed their strong disapprobation, and so Mr. Irvine has felt it necessary to resign. *The Christian Commonwealth* says New York must be on its guard, as "London has its eye on him." Mr. Irvine's career is one that should form a strong incentive to young men in inducing them to fight against adverse circumstances.

* * *

Dr. Edward Everett Hale, was one of the prophets of the United States, a Unitarian one, who was not stoned, and yet is going to have a statue raised to his memory. And this not of a denominational, but of a national character. There was nothing sensational about Dr. Hale. He was a living man with high ideals and practical aims, of devout purpose, with a strong desire to be useful to his fellow creatures. In some places Unitarian ministers are carefully excluded from the fraternity of well-doers. Not so in the United States. There people do not value a man according to the character of his beliefs but for the assistance he renders his fellow creature on the journey of life. Venerable and venerated, Dr. Hale took much interest in assisting new-comers to find their way to the great West. He was Chaplain to the United States Senate, and has been succeeded in that position by another Unitarian Minister. How many ages will have passed before it is possible for a Unitarian minister to be appointde to such a position in England, and to have a statue raised to his memory when dead? The idea is almost unthinkable, so far are we

from the enjoyment of perfect religious equality.

* * *

Ireland was poorer in the number of its inhabitants at the close of 1909, than it was at the close of 1908, notwithstanding the fact that there were 27,786 more births than deaths. The difference is accounted for by the fact that 28,676 people emigrated to other countries.

* * *

A distinctive agency, and one hitherto regarded as of vital importance to Wesleyan Methodism—the Class Meeting—is at present agitating the minds of a number of leading men in Methodist bodies. The class-meeting is mainly an experience meeting, a semi-private confessional, which it was long regarded as disloyal, to reproach. Now, men whose loyalty is undoubted, are pleading for liberty in regard to it, to hold it, or not. It may have a preserving influence with some, but it is a source or a means of temptation to others—an inducement to exaggerate, and perhaps trifle with truth. Evidently it is not as widely esteemed as it once was.

* * *

Religion seems to be in a state of transition, or evolution, so far as its public manifestation and support are concerned. While most denominations are lamenting decreases in the number of their adherents, it is gratifying to read of very large gatherings under the title of The Brotherhood Movement, taking place in different parts of the United Kingdom on Sunday afternoons, for religious purposes, many of them being of a very earnest character. At one meeting, it was estimated that 5,000 people were present, at another, 3,000, the same number at a third, and a fourth, while in other cases, though large, the numbers were not given. The Archbishop of York, and Sir R. W. Perks, have lately addressed large Brotherhood meetings. In these cases, the attendance betoken support of a movement, rather than of congregational life. This distinction should be borne in mind still many, by this means, may be induced to identify themselves with various congregations. The creed, if creed it can be called, is, the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of Man, and the great text, is the Sermon on the Mount. If the movement can be kept free from party politics and rampant socialism it will doubtless become a grand movement. It is hoped that the Brotherhood Movement may absorb and supersede the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Movement, which in many cases has degenerated into a source of entertainment, with socialism thrown in. So far as I have observed, this evolutionary movement in religious matters, is breaking down the walls of partition between the sects, and making people feel that they may be one in aim, in spirit, without seeing eye to eye in matters theological.

The fight for religious freedom still proceeds between Spain and Rome. May victory eventually be on the side of freedom. But before that day arrives, the conflict, as it was in France, will doubtless be severe. So acute have the relations become that Spain has recalled its ambassador from the Vatican, and Rome will probably now do its worst. The present situation has arisen, as has previously been stated, in consequence of a small measure of religious freedom being granted to Protestants. Trouble, it is affirmed, is being fomented by the clerical party, and blows have been struck. When the worst comes England may expect to have hundreds of monks and nuns dumped down on her southern shores as she had from France. Many week-kneed Protestants will most probably succumb to the influences that will emanate from the religious houses that will be established.

* * *

I have spoken of Unitarian ministers being often excluded from the fraternity of well-doers; here is an instance:—In connection with the agitation for poor-law reform that is going on just now, a Congregational Literary Society applied to the National Poor-Law Reform Committee for a lecturer on the subject, and the name of one was given. All was right until it became known that the name was that of a Unitarian minister when "the scene was changed." Because his theology was not that of "the rulers" of the Society in question, he could not be allowed to advocate poor law reform. Belief in natural depravity, the trinity, a commercial atonement, and hell-fire, would have been a first-class recommendation.—W.S.S.

BIRTH.

ROSSINGTON.—August, 17th, at Ardeevin, Cadogan Park, Belfast, the wife of Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., a daughter.

Marriage.

M'KAY—MINNIS.—August 4th, at the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, Dunmurry, by the Rev. J. A. Kelly, John Wallace M'Kay, Agricultural Instructor, Co. Dublin, eldest son of John M'Kay, Secon, Ballymoney, to Margaret, second daughter of James W. Minnis, Ballygowan.

Printed by J. W. Boyd, 2, Union Street (first door from Donegall Street), Belfast. May also be had from Mr. Eustace Gordon, the Depository, Rosemary St., Belfast; and from Rev. A. Turner, Templepatrick, to whom all communications respecting the Magazine should be addressed. Business Agent:—Rev. George J. Slipper, The Manse, Newry, Co. Down.

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